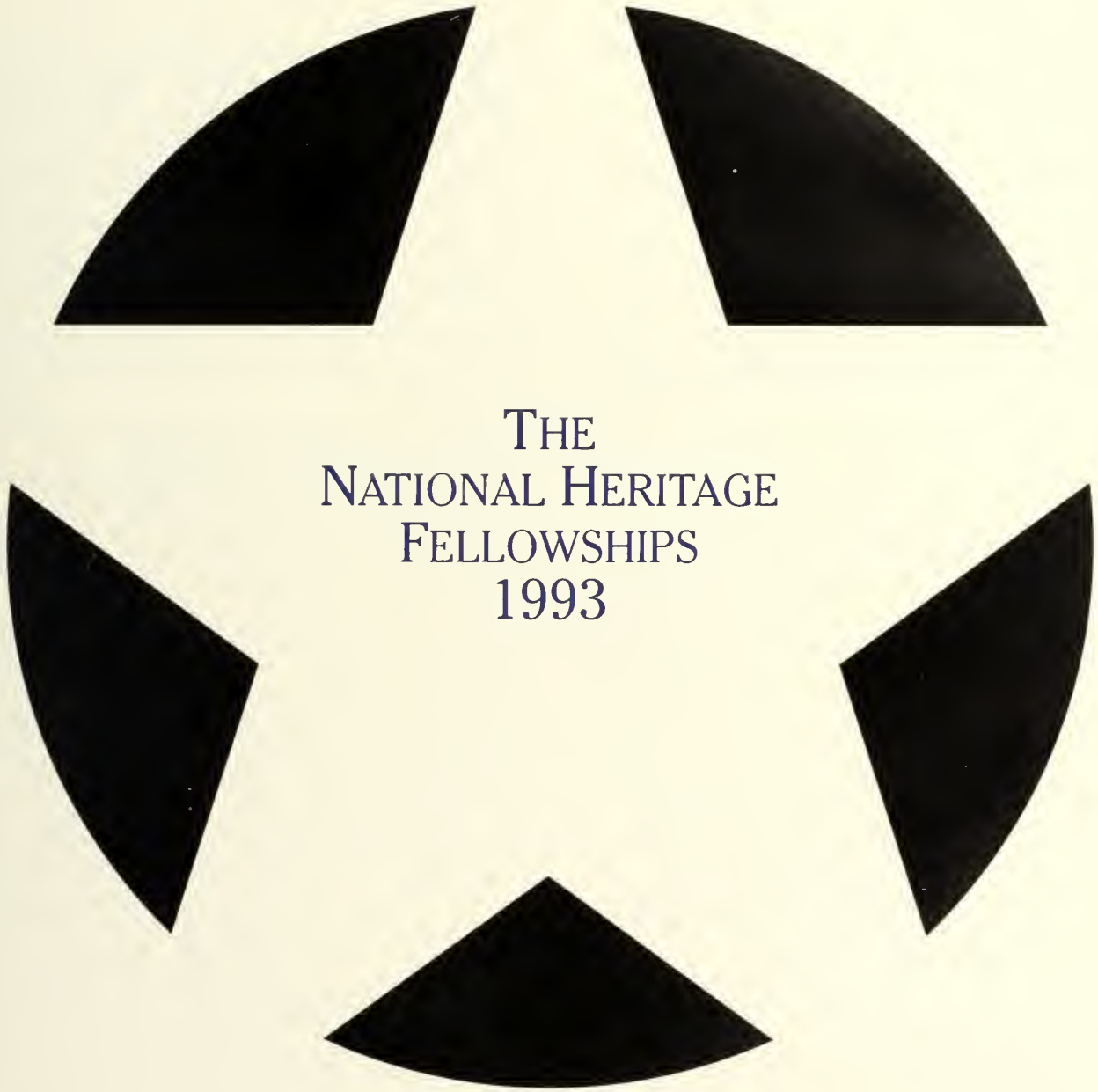
The National Heritage Fellowships 1993



THE NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLOWSHIPS 1993

THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS
FOLK ARTS PROGRAM

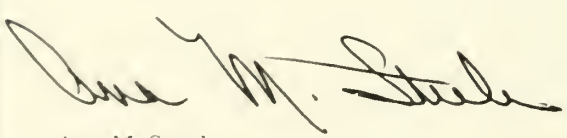
THE NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLOWS 1993

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

Welcome to the twelfth celebration of the National Heritage Fellows! Each year since 1982, the National Endowment for the Arts, through it's Folk Arts Program, has awarded a baker's dozen-or-so of these fellowships to some of our nation's most talented, accomplished, and giving traditional folk artists. The criteria for their selection are artistic excellence, authenticity and significance within their tradition, and contributions to their community and to American culture through their artistry. Consequently, each of the Heritage Fellows has been counted among the first-rate exponents of their art, each is invested with the power and authority of the tradition he or she represents, and each is endowed with the generosity of spirit that is typical of so many folk artists.

The Heritage Fellows did not apply for these fellowships; they were nominated by others who felt that they were deserving of national recognition. This year, 209 nominations were reviewed by the Folk Arts Program advisory panel, a rotating body of peer experts in the traditional arts. The panel's recommendations were then reviewed and endorsed by the presidentially-appointed members of the National Council on the Arts, an endorsement I was proud to approve. The resulting list of 1993 Fellows spans the geographic width and length of the nation—from Hawaii to New Jersey and from Alaska to Louisiana—and typifies the cultural diversity that is the foundation of our country's spiritual strength and vitality—from age old Mesquakie songs to Mississippi Delta blues, and from the craftsmanship of a 19th-century Atlantic boatbuilding tradition to intricate weaving brought in the last two decades from Laos.

In cooperation with the National Council for the Traditional Arts, we have brought the Heritage Fellows to our nation's capital—to honor them, to celebrate them, and to offer them our gratitude for renewing their traditions and invigorating our cultural lives through their creativity and devotion. Please join me in a round of applause for the 1993 National Heritage Fellows!



Ana M. Steele
Acting Senior Deputy Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts

When someone asks the question " What are the folk arts?", we tell of how they emerge from the shared values, lifeways, and experiences of *groups* of people—ethnic groups, regional communities, occupational groups, families, and so forth. We point to how the folk arts, often in contrast to the "fine arts," serve to reaffirm those values of a traditional art form being used by the group it represents as a badge of identity—a rallying point for cultural cohesion and a means of projecting group identity to the rest of the world. All this language about the importance of the group, of course, is true. At the same time, we in the Folk Arts Program feel that the contributions of *individual* folk artists deserve recognition and support, and the National Heritage Fellowships are intended to do just that.

National Heritage Fellowships have two purposes—1) to honor and to reward some of our nation's most distinguished traditional artists for their past excellence and artistic contributions to others and 2) to share their accomplishments and inspirations with the American public. As to the former, eleven fellowships in the amount of $10,000 were awarded this year in support of the Fellows' future efforts. Tragically, a twelfth individual, master bit and spur maker Elmer Miller of Nampa, Idaho was also selected, but passed away before the grant was awarded. Nevertheless, we have invited his family members to join us in this celebration.

In pursuit of the second purpose, we intend this celebration of the Heritage Fellows to provide a window through which we may see the extraordinary efforts of these individuals. While all the Fellows have achieved the highest standards of excellence in their artistic tradition, many have taken on other roles that distinguish them—those of innovator, teacher, role model, or advocate for example. Kenny Baker set the style and standards for bluegrass fiddling. Yup'ik elders Nick and Elena Charles have shouldered the responsibility of teaching tribal youths the age-old traditions of their ancestors. Pualani and Nalani Kanaka'ole are leaders in the Hawaiian sovereignty movement. Each of the other Fellows has made similarly special contributions to the shaping and continuation of his or her tradition. There is good reason to celebrate them.

Dan Sheehy
Director
Folk Arts Program

Credits

The 1993 National Heritage Fellowships ceremonies were produced for the National Endowment for the Arts, Folk Arts Program by the National Council for the Traditional Arts. The ceremonies were planned and coordinated for NCTA by Claudia Telliho.

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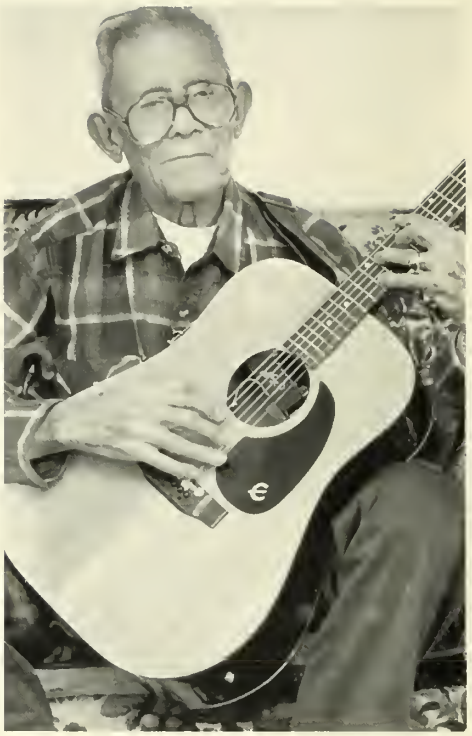


National Heritage Fellowships are one-time-only grants for $10,000 awarded to exemplary master folk artists and artisans who have been nominated by their peers. The nomination criteria are authenticity, excellence, and significance within a particular artistic tradition. Those nominated should be actively participating in their art form, have a record of ongoing artistic accomplishment, and be worthy of national recognition.

Santiago Almeida

Santiago Almeida is one of the fathers of Texas-Mexican conjunto music. Conjunto, one of the most significant, original musical forms in the United States, was created around the turn of the 20th century out of a confluence of Mexican and European (primarily German, Polish, and Czech) music in the southern Texas border region. Formed around the Hohner-style button accordion that was popular among the European immigrants and easily obtainable at that time through the Sears and Roebuck catalog, *conjunto* (literally, "ensemble") music took shape as a uniquely Texas-Mexican form of music in the 1920s and 1930s. At its core are two musical instruments—the accordion and the *bajo sexto*, a thick-necked 12-string guitar with bass strings tuned an octave lower than those of the standard six-string. The stylistic partnership of these two instruments was established largely through the seminal recordings of two musical partners, former National Heritage Fellow Narciso Martinez (now deceased) and bajo sexto player and innovator, Santiago Almeida.

Santiago Almeida was born in Skidmore, Texas, near San Antonio in 1911. He was reared in a musical family, and at the age of 15 was playing in the family orchestra, "La Orquesta Almeida," for dances in the Brownsville, Harlingen, and San Benito area. In 1934, he teamed up with accordionist Narciso Martinez, playing at dances and parties; the following year, they were invited to the Blue Bonnet Hotel in San Antonio to record on the Bluebird label what would be regarded as the first recording of conjunto music, a single with the polka "La Chicharronera" on one side and the schottische "El Tronconal" on the other. Over the next three years, they recorded 60 more records for Bluebird, including one mammoth session in 1936 when they laid down 20 titles in one day and quickly became the most imitated and sought after conjunto of the time. They continued to perform together well into the 1940s, recording on the Ideal and Disco de Oro labels and backing up popular singers in other sessions. For the most part, however, they played for Mexican dances in small south Texas towns.

The key to the embryonic musical innovations of Martinez and Almeida was the greater specialization and advancement of technique of the two instruments and their movement toward a full partnership. The impressive technique and the beauty and creativity that Almeida displayed in carving out this new role for the bajo sexto has been admired by many and matched by very few.

After World War II, Almeida's opportunities for musical work decreased in south Texas as his family increased. In 1950, he took his family north, following the migrant farmworker routes and eventually settling in Washington State, where they picked apples and found other jobs to make a living around their new home of Sunnyside in the Yakima Valley, one of the centers of Mexican migration to that state. Since there were no active conjuntos in the Valley at the time, Almeida took on the role of teacher and mentor to some of today's most highly regarded conjunto musicians in the area. All the while, he continued to play his bajo sexto in family and church settings for enjoyment and to accompany singing.

In 1987, after nearly four decades of isolation from his south Texas homeland, he was inducted into the San Antonio Conjunto Hall of Fame. Almeida has already been honored twice this year, once at the 1993 San Antonio Conjunto Festival and again in Washington State, where he was presented with the Governor's Heritage Award for his contributions to the state's cultural heritage.

Kenny Baker

Joe Wilson, Director of the National Council for the Traditional Arts, has stated, "Kenny Baker may be the most influential folk violinist of our time." Music critic Rick Mitchell of the Houston Chronicle wrote that Kenny Baker "generally is considered to be the greatest bluegrass fiddler of all time." Whether he is referred to as a violinist or a fiddler, there is no disagreement that Kenny Baker in his long career has set a standard by

Left: Santiago Almeida, photo by Craig Miller

Center: Kenny Baker, photo by Tom Raymond

Right: Inez Catalon, photo by Elemore Morgan, Jr.

which his musical peers are measured.

Baker was born in the small coal mining town of Burdine, Kentucky, right on the Virginia state line, in 1926. In his family, he followed a long line of fiddlers. "My daddy played, my great-grandfather played, my grandmother played; I had an aunt that played, and I heard all the old-time fiddle numbers right on up 'til I—they burned me out with it, really. I had in mind I didn't want to play fiddle!" And he didn't. He started playing the guitar when he was seven, and as a youth he was in demand to accompany country dances. "In the country where I lived they'd have these gatherings at people's houses and when the dance came to our house, why they'd get me up...to play the guitar with the fiddle and old drop-thumb banjo, [that] is all they ever had up there."

Ironically, his career as a fiddler started far from the Appalachian coal mines when he was serving in Okinawa in World War II. He was pressed into service by the Red Cross to accompany a square dance and was given a fiddle to play, since there was no other melody instrumentalist available. "It was a fine fiddle, although of course it was set up for a violinist, and I had to jack the bridge down a bit...I played the only two numbers I knew, 'Rubber Dolly' and 'Ragtime Annie.' I played three—maybe four hours at the longest—switched from one number to the other! So I just started from that...".

When he returned to the States, Baker took up western swing fiddling. But it was during his 22-year stint with Bill Monroe starting in 1957 that Baker established himself as one of the greatest fiddle players in country music. Bill Monroe, the "father of bluegrass music" and former National Heritage Fellow, was fond of introducing his musical colleague Kenny Baker as "the greatest fiddler in bluegrass." Writer and bluegrass savant Roger Siminoff echoed these sentiments: "Playing with Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys is like being in the starting lineup for the New York Yankees. You're part of one of the most powerful and respected organizations in your field, and sooner or later just about everybody connected with it knows who you are".

Baker's 20 recordings contain many great fiddle tunes from the last century and beyond as well as over 80 of his own compositions. His fiddling reflects a broad repertoire of swing, old-time, and straight-ahead country styles. The mastery of dynamic control, phrasing, and accuracy in his "long bow" technique is envied and imitated by other fiddlers. In recent years, he has partnered with Josh Graves, the great Dobro guitarist who revitalized that unique American instrument as a member of the Flatt & Scruggs bluegrass band. They toured nationally with the "Masters of the Folk Violin," organized by the National Council for the Traditional Arts.

Inez Catalon

Inez Catalon is a renowned singer of a musical repertoire historically found in Louisiana Creole homes. She learned these cantiques, lullabies, games, ballades, and historical songs from her family while growing up in the southwest Louisiana town of Kaplan. "My father was a singer. My mother sang too. She learned mostly from her mother. I imagine a long time ago they had to have some kind of pleasure for the children. So my music came down that way through generations." Inez Catalon represents the rich tradition of home singing, customarily the province of women, as opposed to Creole zydeco and Cajun dance hall and festival music that until recent years was performed almost exclusively by men and has received most public attention.

Born in Kaplan in 1918, she was the youngest of ten children in a family of German, French, Spanish, and African ancestry. "My granddaddy on my father's side was Spanish...son of a Spanish father and a black mother who was a slave...My grandfather had bought him 1000 acres of land at 25 cents an acre, and he married a woman from France, Marcelette Bouquet...my mother's father (a German) married a Broussard. So you see, we are a very mixed up family." Her family ancestry is typical of the complex, multi-faceted, cultural gumbo of southern Louisiana, and it shows in

her repertoire. Her particular background, in the words of folklorist Nick Spitzer, "is more European than Cajun or Afro-French, and many of her songs have Old World sources. Among the various sorts of songs she sings are those that tell humorous stories (M'Amie m'avait donne) or recount tales of love (Je suis un homme d'une grande famille)." Both in France and in Lousiana, these songs are generally known as cantiques. She also sings Creole songs on humorous and romantic themes as well as a wide range of other tunes.

Inez Catalon's artistry epitomizes that of genuine folksong, in which the singer learns the song as something inseparable from the lifestyle, family and community associations, and intensely personal experiences that are internalized along with it. As she recalls, "After my father died when it would be cold in the wintertime, we had this fireplace, and mama would sing. She'd do it maybe when she got lonesome for her husband. And I'm sitting next to her, and she's in the middle, and we're on both sides. But my sister...maybe she'd have a needle and thread...maybe she was sewing...me, never that. I would look at mama sing, and I'd repeat the words...you know, and then sometimes I would sing with her, and she would correct me." Under the critical eye of her mother, she learned the traditional style and repertoire of her cultural forebears. She recognized that each individual must find their own way of interpreting their cultural legacy. While her mother sang in a rich, deep voice, she does not. "I tried to sing like Mom, but I would be forcing myself and I know I can't do it like that, so I have to do it the natural way, just like I can do it. It's better for you to just act natural than to pretend something you can't do, you know?"

Today, she continues to sing in the same manner and spirit of her childhood, at home among family and friends, in the same compact house where she grew up. Since her appearance at the 1976 Bicentennial Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife in Washington, D.C., though, she has been invited to perform and to represent her Creole culture at many concerts and festivals in Louisiana and throughout the United States. She also appeared in the well-received "A la mode de chez nous" national tour of French-American music and dance, organized by Kathy James for the National Council for the Traditional Arts.

Nicholas & Elena Charles

Nick and Elena Charles are traditional Yup'ik Eskimo elders and master artists whose creativity, generosity of spirit, and embodiment of age-old aesthetic tenets and spiritual ways are recognized and revered by Yup'ik and non-Yup'ik alike. Life-long residents of the Kuskokwim Delta area of southwestern Alaska, their personal and cultural destinies have been linked since they were married in 1936. Nick Charles is a carver of ceremonial masks, wooden dance fans, and a host of utilitarian items, such as bentwood bowls, bows and arrows, paddles, spears, ladles, knife handles, and fish traps. Elena Charles sews the skins of regional fur-bearing animals to create women's fancy parkas and boots; makes birchbark and grass baskets, traditional dolls, and other objects important in Yup'ik life; and is a traditional dancer and singer. They are partners in life and in their work and, as a couple, have been pivotal figures in the past decade of cultural revitalization among their people.

Nick Charles was born in 1912 on Nelson Island, just off the Bering Sea coast between the mouths of the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers. The community in which he was raised was among the least affected by the missionary work begun in the early 19th century that had led to the abandonment of Yup'ik ceremonial life, central to which was traditional dancing and mask carving. Yup'ik masks have been called "the eye of the dance," not only because of their usual shape of a central figure circled by a ring and ornamented with smaller items evocative of the mask's spiritual theme, but also because of the metaphoric nature of spiritual "seeing" often associated with shamanic masking.

Unlike many mask traditions in which a limited repertoire of figures or motifs determine the vast majority of masks, Yup'ik maskmaking calls

Left: Nicholas & Elena Charles, photo by Nicholas Charles, Jr.

Center: Charles Hankins, photo by Lou Presti, NJ Network

for considerable latitude and personal vision by the maker. The mask is the embodiment of a spiritual vision, expressed through the personal interpretation of the carver. As such, the mask may illustrate animals desired in the hunt, allusions to fanciful elements of a dream, oral history and legends, or other images. The mask is one of the most concentrated, central media of personal and group communication and of passing cultural knowledge from one generation to the next.

Elena Charles came to her art by another path. Born around the same time as Nick and raised in the more acculturated town of Kasigluk by parents who preferred that she seek a modern lifestyle rather than learn traditional ways, she consciously decided to seek out the traditional skills of skin sewing, basketmaking, and dollmaking. Although the responsibilities of bearing 17 children, seven of whom are alive today, took up much of her time for many years, she persisted in her artistic activities, making and selling her craftwork and teaching for decades in the Bethel Regional High School, the Lower Kuskokwim School District, and Kuskokwim Community College. She has been a leader in reintroducing Yup'ik dance into the lives of countless youth. She is the consummate Yup'ik dancer, feet almost always planted firmly in place, eyes turned downward and restricted in movement out of respect for the audience, with her hands holding carved wooden dance fans that often pantomime the connotative meaning of the dance.

Though both are retired from many of their activities, they continue to teach carving, dancing, and Yup'ik lifeways to people throughout the region. The desire for a rebirth of Yup'ik culture, rather than personal recognition, is what drives Nick and Elena Charles to continue their work.

Charles E. Hankins

Charles E. Hankins is a master builder of a handmade wooden, regional form of boat known as the "Sea Bright skiff". Noted as an extraordinary craftsman and artist, his family connections to boatbuilding on the New Jersey shore reach back to 1912, and the type of boat he adores and builds was created over 150 years ago.

There are probably as many traditional boat types as there are regions in which particular environmental conditions, economic activities, and cultural history conspire in the creation of boats. In the 1830s, around the area known as Sea Bright, just below Fort Hancock in Monmouth County, New Jersey, there were no inlets of calm water and boats had to be launched directly off the beach into pounding surf. Fishing was vital to the survival of local communities, as were lifesaving capabilities in an area where shipwrecks were common.

In response to this specific set of needs, local shipbuilders applied their time-honored skills to the creation of a new type of boat. Its flat bottom with curved rocker and rounded or "sheer" sides let it skid over the sand and turn easily instead of upsetting. Its slanting stern allows the waves to go under the boat rather than into it when it is being taken ashore, and its relative light weight and flexibility made it unlike any other boat in the world. Over time, the boat became so admired and so associated with the town where it was created that it took its name. Although the Sea Bright skiff has been fine tuned over the years to fit changing local needs—from fishing, to rumrunning during Prohibition, to lifesaving today—its basic form has remained the same.

But in the hands of Charles Hankins, the making of a boat is more than a skilled trade, it is an art. In the Sea Bright skiff, the elements of beauty, function, and identity of the Hankins' family tradition intersect most clearly in the "sheer." Folklorist Rita Moonsammy noted that "sheer not only helps keep the boat from tipping over on the beach, but is what local people think makes a skiff 'look good.' Creating sheer requires particular skill. Hankins uses the 'molds' (wooden forms for different sections of the boat) that his father and Charles Huff used, coupled with his own knowledge and experience. Like many boatmen, he uses anthropomorphic language to describe the process, emphasizing the loose relationship of man and his creation. 'It's almost like your body—has ribs on it and skin over.'" Hankins also feels there is a difference in the ride between his boats and the mass-produced variety that have driven most handmade boatbuilders out of business: "If I ride in fiberglass or steel, it's like riding in a bathtub."

His boats have been ordered for use on ocean beaches in Rhode Island, Nantucket, Long Island, Mary-

Left: Nalani & Pualani Kanaka'ole, photo by Lynn Martin

Center: Everett Kapayou, photo by Gaylord Torrence

Right: McIntosh County Shouters, photo by Margo Newmark Rosenbaum

land, Florida, the Bahamas, as well as in Alaska, Europe, South America, and Greenland. He has built about a thousand since he began in 1945. Two Hankins boats (one by him and the other by his father, Charles M. Hankins) are on display at the Mystic Seaport Museum in Connecticut. Perhaps most significantly, those who use his boats on a daily basis—the communities that line the Jersey shore and their lifeguards—in an age of fiberglass and aluminum, continue to ask Hankins to build new wooden skiffs for them.

Nalani & Pualani Kanaka'ole

The Kanaka'ole sisters, Pualani and Nalani, bear the title *kumu hula*, "hula masters," and are among the most respected teachers and practitioners of the Native Hawaiian complex of performing arts called *mele*. In mele, music, dance, and poetry are inseparable. Ancient poetic texts speak of Hawaiian deities, such as the volcano goddess Pele and revered leaders and are both sung by skilled chanters and embellished through danced pantomime. Various tales and vignettes reveal the deepest traditional values of Hawaiian culture. Mele is one of the most venerable of Hawaiian arts, a centuries-old pillar of Hawaiian culture today.

Nalani and Pualani are daughters of the chanter and kumu hula Edith Kanaka'ole, who was awarded the status of "Living Treasure of Hawai'i" in 1979. They are the inheritors of Halau 'O Kekuhi, the hula school founded by their mother in 1953, and are considered to be kupuna, "respected elders," in their own right. Based in Hilo, on the "big island" of Hawai'i, they are looked to as guardians of the ancient style of hula that pre-dates other forms of the dance that emerged in the 20th century. Certain of the latter were created more to satisfy the demands and expectations of tourists and commercial tourism than to be practiced within Hawaiian tradition.

The traditional mele hula, "danced poetry," of the Kanaka'ole sisters is led by the chanter, who beats a large gourd as percussive accompaniment while seated near the dancers. The vigorous, bent-knee style of dance called *'aiha'a* that pantomimes the poetry is difficult and requires considerable experience and physical conditioning. Also challenging is the *mele oli* (free verse chanted poetry), requiring mastery of Hawaiian language, poetic meanings, vocal manipulation, historical knowledge, and a sense of traditional protocol. Commitment to the *halau* (hula group or school) requires more than learning dance movements; it involves a serious, major commitment to Hawaiian culture.

The value of mele to Hawaiian identity cannot be overestimated. Scholar Ricardo Trimillos has stated, "Sometimes it pervaded all domains of society, as during the reign of Kamehameha I (1775-1819)....at other times it was the only thread that held Hawaiian identity together, as during the two decades of assimilation following statehood in 1959....and it has been a tool for the reclaiming of Hawaiian language by the present Hawaiian population."

The year 1993 marks the hundredth anniversary of the overthrow of the last Hawaiian monarchy, and is thus a watershed year for the Hawaiian cultural and sovereignty movement, at the forefront of which are the Kanaka'ole sisters. Through their years of work in their native Hawai'i and, more recently, through their performances at events such as the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife and the "America's Reunion" celebration on the occasion of the inauguration of President Clinton, they are leaders and symbols of the determination of Native Hawaiians to define and redefine their own culture and to ensure that it will survive into the next century and beyond.

Everett Kapayou

Among the members of the Mesquakie tribe in Iowa, Everett Kapayou is respected as a distinguished tribal elder and religious devotee and for his commanding knowledge of Mesquakie history, his commitment to the preservation of traditional Mesquakie values, and his skill and activism as a singer of traditional Mesquakie songs. His repertoire is

immense and wide-ranging, appropriate for singing at both sacred ceremonies and secular events such as powwows and informal gatherings. In contrast to the pan-Indian singing style that dominates most powwows, often at the expense of local and tribal-specific song traditions, Kapayou's songs carry in them the unique identity of the Mesquakie people.

Everett Kapayou was born on the Mesquakie settlement in Tama, Iowa in 1933, the last of five children. His mother, Lucille Kapayou, was a flute player of Mesquakie sacred and secular melodies. Everett learned much of his repertoire from her, first learning the melody from her flute playing, then having his mother—who did not sing—recite the texts for him to memorize, and finally putting the two together to sing the song. (Ironically, years later, he would teach his songs to Lakota flutist and former Heritage Fellow, Kevin Locke, who, in turn, performed them exclusively on the flute as Everett's mother had done.)

Stylistically, the Mesquakie, meaning literally "Red Earth People," have been influenced by a variety of neighboring tribal cultures and contemporary pan-Indian trends. During the 17th century, they were based in Wisconsin and came into contact with Algonquin-speaking tribes such as the Potawatomi and Menomini. By the 19th century, they had resettled in Iowa and absorbed some of the cultural traits of the Eastern Plains and Prairie buffalo-hunting tribes like the Omaha and eastern Sioux.

In the 20th century, the homogenizing effects of non-Indian and pan-Indian popular culture have taken their toll on those traditions that are particular to the Mesquakie. Kapayou is concerned about the overwhelming nature of this latest cultural assault on Mesquakie culture and about the young people who are striving to adjust to the demands, challenges, and opportunities of modern American life without abandoning their tribal identity and cultural heritage.

As Gaylord Torrence, author of *Art of the Red Earth People: The Mesquakie of Iowa*, says of Kapayou, "It is in this capacity [as a renowned singer] that he has made one of his most significant contributions, preserving a great number of the traditional love songs...These songs are especially important because they reflect an intimate aspect of traditional culture, and also because they are the only true Mesquakie songs which may be sung outside the context of a religious ceremony and may, therefore, be experienced by the general public. Indeed, the content of these beautiful songs embodies feelings which are truly universal in their expressions and provide a dimension of human understanding which transcends cultural boundaries." His secular songs are love songs, "mood "songs, and/or "drinking" songs, appropriate for get-togethers among friends. He is also called upon to provide the singing for private sacred events.

Everett Kapayou is a quiet, dignified man who has worked continuously for the welfare of his people throughout his life. He is deeply respected by his own Mesquakie people, other Native Americans, and many non-Natives as well.

McIntosh County Shouters

The McIntosh County Shouters are the principal, and perhaps the last, active practitioners of one of the most venerable of African-American song and movement traditions—the "shout," also known as the "ring shout." First written about by outsiders in 1845, its stylistic antecedents in African tradition are indisputable. The principles of call-and-response singing, dance movement, interlocking rhythms, and the style of group devotion embedded in the shout made it a main lifeline to the West African cultural legacy

through times of slavery and into the 20th century.

In the United States, it was linked to Christian devotion, customarily performed in churches and rural praise houses after formal religious services ended and the benches were moved to make way for the shouters. Today the shout survives as a tradition to welcome in the New Year from midnight until near dawn on Watch Night.

The patriarch of the McIntosh County Shouters is septuagenarian Lawrence McKiver. He is the group's lead singer or "songster," the one who starts, or "sets," a song before the shouters join in, often improvises on the song's theme, and ends the song at the right moment. Accompanying him is the "stickman" Benjamin Reed, who beats on the wooden floor with a thick stick to control the rhythmic pace. "I can set 'em, and once they get it, I can turn 'em loose...and I can bring 'em back right where I want 'em", says Reed. Other members clap their hands in an interlocking rhythmic pattern. Sometimes Sister Doretha Skipper takes over as song leader. Usually she is one of the "basers," a group of singers who stand behind the leader and the stick-man, answering call-and-response fashion, the lead singer's phrases. When the song hits its stride, the shouters, women dressed in head-rags of their grandmothers' day, begin to move counterclockwise in a ring.

Religious rules against dancing prohibit the shouters from raising their feet high off the floor or from crossing one foot over the other, so they move in the shuffling fashion characteristic of the "holy dance," often stooping over and moving their arms to pantomime the song in a fashion reminiscent of African custom. The songs are sung to

many different melodies, their themes ranging from Biblical vignettes and Biblical themes transmuted to speak of worldly conditions such as those under slavery, to contemporary topics such as the scourge of drugs and the death of a fellow shouter.

The McIntosh County Shouters first began performing outside their community around the Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in "Briar Patch" or Bolton Community, Eulonia, GA, in 1980, when they appeared at the Georgia Sea Islands Festival on St. Simon's Island and at the National Folk Festival. Since then, they have taken their deep African-American tradition to the National Black Arts Festival, other festivals in the Southeast, the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, and the World Music Institute in New York City. In the words of the latter's director Robert Browning, the Shouters' performances were "powerful statements on the indestructibility of the human spirit."

Jack Owens

That the Mississippi blues is one of America's original, most popular, and most nationally and internationally influential art forms is beyond dispute. It was a major tributary to jazz, is one of the parents of rock and roll, and was retooled and electrified for urban tastes by popular music giants such as former Heritage Fellow, B.B. King. In fact, the blues has become so popular that it is easy to forget that it was created through the genius of poverty-stricken Black farming people living in the shadow of slavery in the deep South. It is likewise easy to overlook the fact that while some blues musicians migrated to the big city and became famous, many equally great traditional artists stayed back on the farm, preferring to be near their families, the familiar surroundings, and the cultural roots that they loved. One of the greatest of that now senior generation of "country" blues musicians is Jack Owens of Bentonia, Mississippi, a rural town situated on the edge of the Delta between Jackson and Yazoo City.

The Bentonia blues style that Jack Owens plays is distinct from the other localized blues traditions in and around Mississippi. In the words of blues scholar David Evans, "it is distinctive for its high melismatic singing and complex melodies, its minor-keyed, intricately picked guitar parts, and haunting, brooding lyrics dealing with such themes as loneliness, death, and the supernatural, in addition to the usual lyrics about love and its problems....Hearing Jack Owens singing out across the fields late at night is one of the most moving experiences I have ever had." In contrast to most bluesmen, though, Owens thinks of himself as more of a guitar player than a singer, being proud of his knowledge of alternate guitar parts to his songs, as exemplified by his long instrumental breaks between lines.

Until recent years, Owens routinely turned down frequent offers to

Left: Jack Owens, photo by Axel Küstner

Center and right: Mone & Vanxay Saenphimmachak, photo by Ann Rynearson

tour outside of his region, partly because of his reluctance to leave his house and farm unattended and partly out of a need to care for his bedridden wife. It was only in 1988 that he and his harmonica-playing companion Bud Spires began to take an occasional short trip to perform in Yazoo City or Jackson. Since the passing of his wife, he has made longer trips to Atlanta and Chicago. Nonetheless, after he was first recorded in 1966, he has been visited by record producers, aspiring young musicians, and aficionados from many parts of the United States, Europe, and Japan. He cut his first full album in 1970 and has appeared on recordings by American, Austrian, and Italian companies. He appeared in the British film documentary "Deep Blues," and Alan Lomax's documentary, "Land Where the Blues Began." Those who visit his home as though on a pilgrimage to a blues shrine know him as a gracious and generous host, willing to give tips on guitar playing.

Today at 88 years of age, Jack Owens sounds no less impressive than in his younger years, although he has slowed somewhat the pace of his music. He says this is not because he can't play as fast, but rather because he wishes to pace himself to keep the original Bentonia blues going for years to come.

MONE & VANXAY SAENPHIMMACHAK

In Laos, almost all girls learn how to weave and almost all boys learn how to make looms. Mone Saenphimmachak and her husband Vanxay were raised in Mahasai, a small village of about 500 families in central Laos. As a child, Mone had observed her mother's skill at many kinds of needlework, working in part to supplement Mone's father's income as a school teacher and owner of one of the village's two elephants which were used to transport trade goods around the region. At age 12, Mone began in earnest to learn the techniques of weaving and embroidery for which she is so admired today.

When Vanxay married Mone, he discovered that his skills were lacking. "Usually a man learns how to make a loom from his father, but my father had a cargo boat and he traveled a lot. I never learned from him. When I got married to Mone, her father laughed at me and said, 'Why did you get married if you don't even know how to make a loom?' I was embarrassed and studied with him very hard. After one year, I was able to make a pretty good loom for Mone. Then she could weave clothes for our family and to sell and make a little money."

Mone is steeped in a rich, centuries-old cultural milieu that took shape in what is now Laos when, in the 14th century, the Lao-Thai ethnic group migrated southward from China to settle next to Southeast Asian ethnic groups influenced for generations by Indian civilization. Part of this cultural legacy was a tradition of fine, highly decorative weaving and precisely-executed embroidery, marked by intricate geometrical designs and motifs of benign elements of everyday life, such as elephants, deer, and roosters.

The quality of weaving and embroidery is a powerful signifier in a Lao woman's life. When Mone decided to marry, it was with great trepidation that she presented one of her sarongs to her mother-in-law to be, since she knew that the level of skill it demonstrated would be a measure of her worthiness. In a country of many ethnic groups like Laos, the style of needlework and motifs is a proudly-worn badge of identity that distinguishes Mone's lowland Lao people from the Hmong, Khmhu, Mien, and others.

The major turning point in the life of Mone and Vanxay was the Communist takeover of Laos in 1975, when 10% of the population fled to Thai refugee camps for resettlement abroad. Mone, Vanxay, and their four children were more fortunate than most as, for reasons they never knew, they and a number of other Lao were resettled in St. Louis, Missouri. The despair of uprootedness and culture shock they experienced on arriving in St. Louis in midwinter is beyond words. But Mone soon saw that her skills at weaving and embroidery could serve as a linchpin in transmitting a piece of Lao culture to succeeding generations in her new land. She weaves, she says, "so Lao

people love one another...And we may recognize ourselves by those patterns."

Mone and Vanxay have returned to weaving with a sense of cultural commitment and renewal that has touched the lives of many. Vanxay has made three looms to date, allowing Mone to teach others or to work on several pieces at once. His looms are now more elaborately decorated as works of art in their own right, with post-heads sculpted into graceful turrets.

Even though Mone and Vanxay work six days a week to make ends meet, they spend every free moment weaving and teaching others to weave. Their home is a vital center for Lao culture, as fellow immigrants stop by to chat while they weave, and new generations, with no memory of their beloved Laos, discover some of the beautiful threads of their cultural history.

Liang-xing Tang

Liang-xing Tang is a virtuoso performer and teacher of the Chinese *pipa*, a pear-shaped, vertically-held lute, popular in China since the 16th century. Born near Shanghai in 1948, he was raised in a family whose members "loved Chinese musical instruments so much that they organized the entire family into a music group...We learned music under the guidance of our father and grandfather," he recalls. They were known around Shanghai in the 1950s and 1960s as Tang's Musical Group, and it was in this family setting that Liang-xing Tang began studying *erhu* (two-stringed bowed lute) at age seven. His impressive talent resulted in his selection at age 13 to join the Shanghai Chinese Music Orchestra, but when the instructors saw his large, long-fingered hands, they moved him to pipa.

Left: Liang-xing Tang, photo by Corky Lee

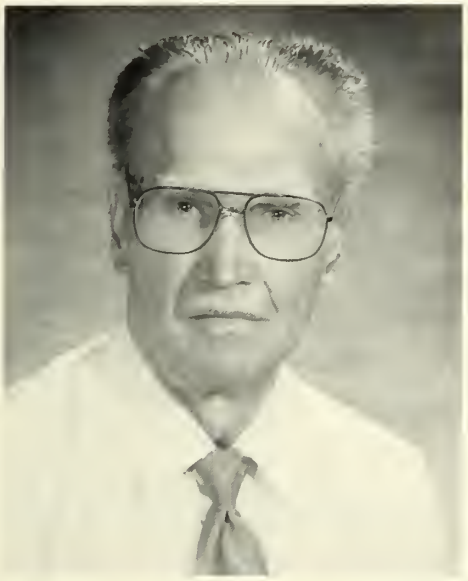
Right: Elmer Miller, photo by Ray Pickthorn

When younger, he was present when master teacher Cheng Wujia taught pipa to his older sister. "It was the first time I'd heard major pipa works, and I was enthralled."

Pipa is played both solo and as an ensemble instrument. It is perhaps best known and admired for its traditional repertoire of "programmatic" pieces that paint vivid sonoral pictures of events, scenes, or moods. None is more famous than "Ambush from All Sides," originating as early as the 16th century and describing the battle between warlords of the Chu and Han States. One critic commented of Tang's performance, "Through his powerful music, one could almost see the battling troops, the bows and arrows, the shouting victors and moaning losers." Two other popular titles he frequently performs are "Night of Flowers and Moon on a Spring River" and "Song of the Frontier."

The tradition leaves ample room for individual expression, and a given piece may differ greatly from one performance to another, between performers, and among schools of playing style. Tang upholds the traditional view that each pipa player should cultivate his or her own distinctive style rather than to try to outdo one's peers, as he feels many young performers do today. His own style is one of exuberance with a fine lyrical sense and melodic awareness. "My first teacher Ma Linsheng told me, 'It's better to strengthen your own style and unique characteristics than to surpass others.' In pipa, there's no undisputed champion. It's more important for individuals to blossom—only that is pipa's springtime."

Many today praise Tang as one of the world's greatest pipa virtuosi. When he immigrated to the United States in 1986, the demand for his performances, particularly on the part of Chinese audiences and Chinese music savants, was immediate and overwhelming. In his first five years in the U.S., he gave over 500 recitals and major concerts, at a wide range of events from folk festivals to Chinese celebrations, to major concert halls, to regular appearances as a soloist in the Broadway play M. Butterfly. He is widely sought as a teacher of pipa, *erhu*, and *gu qin* (seven-string zither). Both of his twin daughters, Juehua and Jueli, now 16 years old, have followed in his family's musical tradition and frequently perform with him on pipa. Mr. Tang's importance to the American and international Chinese communities is inestimable, but he also sees the special value of his music in a multicultural society. "I believe music can forge a link between people and stimulate understanding and communication."



Elmer Miller

Mr. Elmer Miller, master bit and spur maker from Nampa, Idaho was selected to receive a 1993 National Heritage Fellowship, but sadly for all of us he passed away before the fellowship could be awarded.

Born in 1914 and reared on a cattle ranch is Nevada's Paradise Valley, Elmer Miller first learned about the needs of horses and the buckaroos who rode them from direct observation. Basic skills in blacksmithing came first, then he began making bits and spurs, essential cowboy equipment. While still learning the trade, he moved to San Francisco and associated himself with an older and highly skilled Mexican bit maker, Filo Gutierrez. By 1950 he was back in the Paradise Valley, ranching and silversmithing.

In 1963 he set up shop in Nampa, Idaho and his shop became a famous source for the very highest quality spurs and bits, belt buckle sets, bolo ties, and other functional and decorative items associated with cowboying. Pleased customers spread his name all over the world. In the mid-1980s his concern for tradition led him to establish a school to teach these arts, and students came from as far away as Australia to learn from Elmer and share meals with the Millers. His legacy will continue in the good hands that he trained.

Master of Ceremonies

Roger Welsch is a folklorist, humorist, author, and television personality. He regularly hosts the "Postcards from Nebraska" segment of "Sunday Morning with Charles Kuralt" on CBS, bringing glimpses of life in and around his farm in Dannebrog, Nebraska to millions of viewers. His book *It's Not the End of the Earth, But You Can See It from Here: Tales of the Great Plains* tells humorous and moving stories of life in the rural Great Plains. He served on the Folk Arts Program advisory panel from 1978 to 1980 and was its chairman in 1980.

Acknowledgements

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Willie Smyth
Gaylord Torrence
Maria Williams

The National Heritage Fellows 1982-1992

1982

Dewey Balfa*
Cajun Fiddler
Basile, LA

Joe Heaney*
Irish Singer
Brooklyn, NY

Tommy Jarrell*
Appalachian Fiddler
Mt. Airy, NC

Bessie Jones*
Georgia Sea Island Singer
Brunswick, GA

George Lopez
Santos Woodcarver
Cordova, NM

Brownie McGhee
Blues Guitarist
Oakland, CA

Hugh McGraw
Shape Note Singer
Bremen, GA

Lydia Mendoza
Mexican-American Singer
Houston, TX

Bill Monroe
Bluegrass Musician
Nashville, TN

Elijah Pierce*
Carver/Painter
Columbus, OH

Adam Popovich
Tamburitza Musician
Dolton, IL

Georgeann Robinson*
Osage Ribbonworker
Bartlesville, OK

Duff Severe
Western Saddlemaker
Pendleton, OR

Philip Simmons
Ornamental Ironworker
Charleston, SC

Sanders "Sonny" Terry*
Blues Musician
Holliswood, NY

1983

Sister Mildred Barker*
Shaker Singer
Poland Springs, ME

Rafael Cepeda
Bomba Musician/Dancer
Santurce, PR

Ray Hicks
Appalachian Storyteller
Banner Elk, NC

Stanley Hicks*
Appalachian Musician/Storyteller/Instrument Maker
Vilas, NC

John Lee Hooker
Blues Guitarist/Singer
San Carlos, CA

Mike Manteo*
Sicilian Marionettist
Staten Island, NY

Narciso Martinez*
Texas-Mexican Accordionist/Composer
San Benito, TX

Lanier Meaders
Potter
Cleveland, GA

Almeda Riddle*
Ballad Singer
Greers Ferry, AR

Simon St. Pierre
French-American Fiddler
Smyrna Mills, ME

Joe Shannon
Irish Piper
Chicago, IL

Alex Stewart*
Cooper/Woodworker
Sneedville, TN

Ada Thomas*
Chitimacha Basketmaker
Charenton, LA

Lucinda Toomer*
Black Quilter
Columbus, GA

Lem Ward*
Decoy Carver/Painter
Crisfield, MD

Dewey Williams
Shape Note Singer
Ozark, AL

1984

Clifton Chenier*
Creole Accordionist
Lafayette, LA

Bertha Cook*
Knotted Bedspread Maker
Boone, NC

Joseph Cormier
Cape Breton Violinist
Waltham, MA

Elizabeth Cotten*
Black Songster/Songwriter
Syracuse, NY

Burlon Craig
Potter
Vale, NC

Albert Fahlbusch
Hammered Dulcimer Maker/Player
Scottsbluff, NE

Janie Hunter
Black Singer/Storyteller
Johns Island, SC

Mary Jane Manigault
Black Seagrass Basket Maker
Mt. Pleasant, SC

Genevieve Mougin*
Lebanese-American Lace Maker
Bettendorf, IA

Martin Mulvihill*
Irish-American Fiddler
Bronx, NY

Howard "Sandman" Sims
Black Tap Dancer
New York, NY

Ralph Stanley
Appalachian Banjo Player/Singer
Coeburn, VA

Margaret Tafoya
Santa Clara Pueblo Potter
Espanola, NM

Dave Tarras*
Klezmer Clarinetist
Brooklyn, NY

Paul Tiulana
Eskimo Maskmaker/Dancer/Singer
Anchorage, AK

Cleofes Vigil*
Hispanic Storyteller/Singer
San Cristobal, NM

Emily Kau'i Zuttermeister
Hula Master
Kaneohe, HI

1985

Eppie Archuleta
Hispanic Weaver
San Luis Valley, CO

Periklis Halkias
Greek Clarinetist
Astoria, Queens, NY

Jimmy Jausoro
Basque Accordionist
Boise, ID

Meali'i Kalama*
Hawaiian Quilter
Honolulu, HI

Lily May Ledford*
Appalachian Musician/Singer
Lexington, KY

Leif Melgaard*
Norwegian Woodcarver
Minneapolis, MN

Bua Xou Mua
Hmong Musician
Portland, OR

Julio Negron-Rivera
Puerto Rican Instrument Maker
Morovis, PR

Alice New Holy Blue Legs
Lakota Sioux Quill Artist
Oglala, SD

Glenn Ohrlin
Cowboy Singer/Storyteller/Illustrator
Mountain View, AR

Henry Townsend
Blues Musician/Songwriter
St. Louis, MO

Horace "Spoons" Williams*
Spoons/Bones Player/Poet
Philadelphia, PA

1986

Alfonse "Bois Sec" Ardoin
Black Creole Accordionist
Eunice, LA

Earnest Bennett
Anglo-American Whittler
Indianapolis, IN

Helen Cordero
Pueblo Potter
Cochiti, NM

Sonia Domsch
Czech-American Bobbin Lace Maker
Atwood, KS

Canray Fontenot
Black Creole Fiddler
Welsh, LA

John Jackson
Black Songster/Guitarist
Fairfax Station, VA

Peou Khatna
Cambodian Court Dancer/Choreographer
Silver Spring, MD

Valerio Longoria
Mexican-American Accordionist
San Antonio, TX

Joyce Doc Tate Nevaquaya
Comanche Indian Flutist
Apache, OK

Luis Ortega
Hispanic-American Rawhide Worker
Paradise, CA

Ola Belle Reed
Appalachian Banjo Picker/Singer
Rising Sun, MD

Jenny Thlunaut*
Tlingit Chilkat Blanket Weaver
Haines, AK

Nimrod Workman
Appalachian Ballad Singer
Mascot, TN/Chattaroy, WV

1987

Juan Alindato
Carnival Maskmaker
Ponce, PR

Louis Bashell
Slovenian Accordionist/Polka Master
Greenfield, WI

Genoveva Castellanoz
Mexican-American Corona Maker
Nyssa, OR

Thomas Edison "Brownie" Ford
Anglo-Comanche Cowboy Singer/Storyteller
Hebert, LA

Kansuma Fujima
Japanese-American Dancer
Los Angeles, CA

Claude Joseph Johnson*
African-American Religious Singer/Orator
Atlanta, GA

Raymond Kane
Hawaiian Slack Key Guitarist/Singer
Wai'anae, HI

Wade Mainer
Appalachian Banjo Picker/Singer
Flint, MI

Sylvester McIntosh
Crucian Singer/Bandleader
St. Croix, VI

Allison "Totie" Montana
Mardi Gras Chief/Costume Maker
New Orleans, LA

Alex Moore, Sr.*
African-American Blues Pianist
Dallas, TX

Emilio and Senaida Romero
Hispanic-American Craftsworkers in Tin and Embroidery
Santa Fe, NM

Newton Washburn
Split Ash Basketmaker
Littleton, NH

1988

Pedro Ayala*
Mexican-American Accordionist
Donna, TX

Kepka Belton
Czech-American Egg Painter
Ellsworth, KS

Amber Densmore*
New England Quilter/Needleworker
Chelsea, VT

Michael Flatley
Irish-American Stepdancer
Palos Park, IL

Sister Rosalia Haberl
German-American Bobbin Lacemaker
Hankinson, ND

John Dee Holeman
African-American Dancer/Musician/Singer
Durham, NC

Albert "Sunnyland Slim" Luandrew
African-American Blues Pianist/Singer
Chicago, IL

Yang Fang Nhu
Hmong Weaver/Embroiderer
Detroit, MI

Kenny Sidle
Anglo-American Fiddler
Newark, OH

Willie Mae Ford Smith
African-American Gospel Singer
St. Louis, MO

Clyde "Kindy" Sproat
Hawaiian Cowboy Singer/Ukulele Player
Kapa'au, HI

Arthel "Doc" Watson
Appalachian Guitar Player/Singer
Deep Gap, NC

1989

John Cephas
Piedmont Blues Guitarist/Singer
Woodford, VA

The Fairfield Four
African-American a capella Gospel Singers
Nashville, TN

Jose Gutierrez
Mexican Jarocho Musician/Singer
Norwalk, CA

Richard Avedis Hagopian
Armenian Oud Player
Visalia, CA

Christy Hengel
German-American Concertina Maker
New Ulm, MN

Ilias Kementzides
Pontic Greek Lyra Player
Norwalk, CT

Ethel Kvalheim
Norwegian Rosemaler
Stoughton, WI

Vanessa Paukeigope Morgan
Kiowa Regalia Maker
Anadarko, OK

Mabel E. Murphy
Anglo-American Quilter
Fulton, MO

LaVaughn E. Robinson
African-American Tapdancer
Philadelphia, PA

Earl Scruggs
Bluegrass Banjo Player
Madison, TN

Harry V. Shourds
Wildfowl Decoy Carver
Seaville, NJ

Chesley Goseyun Wilson
Apache Fiddle Maker
Tucson, AZ

1990

Howard Armstrong
African-American String Band Musician
Detroit, MI

Em Bun
Cambodian Silk Weaver
Harrisburg, PA

Natividad Cano
Mexican Mariachi Musician
Monterey Park, CA

Giuseppe and Raffaela DeFranco
Southern Italian Musicians and Dancers
Belleville, NJ

Maude Kegg
Ojibwe Storyteller/Craftsman/Tradition Bearer
Onamie, MN

Kevin Locke
Lakota Flute Player/Singer/Dancer/Storyteller
Mobridge, SD

Marie McDonald
Hawaiian Lei Maker
Kamuela, HI

Wallace McRae
Cowboy Poet
Forsyth, MT

Art Moilanen
Finnish Accordionist
Mass City, MI

Emilio Rosado
Woodcarver
Utuado, PR

Robert Spicer
Flatfoot Dancer
Dickson, TN

Douglas Wallin
Appalachian Ballad Singer
Marshall, NC

1991

Etta Baker
African-American guitarist
Morgantown, NC

George Blake
Native American craftsman (Hupa-Yurok)
Hoopa, CA

Jack Coen
Irish-American flautist
Bronx, NY

Rose Frank
Native American cornhusk weaver (Nez Perce)
Lapwai, ID

Eduardo "Lalo" Guerrero
Mexican-American singer/guitarist/composer
Cathedral City, CA

Khamvong Insixiengmai
Southeast Asian singer (Lao)
Fresno, CA

Don King
Western saddlemaker
Sheridan, WY

Riley "B.B. " King
African-American bluesman
Itta Bena, MS and Las Vegas, NV

Esther Littlefield
Alaskan regalia maker (Tlingit)
Sitka, AK

Seisho "Harry" Nakasone
Okinawan-American musician
Honolulu, HI

Irvan Perez
Isleno (Canary Island) singer
Poydras, LA

Morgan Sexton *
Appalachian banjo player/singer
Linefork, KY

Nikitas Tsimouris
Greek-American musician (bagpipe player)
Tarpon Springs, FL

Gussie Wells
African-American quilter
Oakland, CA

Arbie Williams
African-American quilter
Oakland, CA

Melvin Wine
Appalachian fiddler
Copen, WV

1992

Francisco Aguabella
Afro-Cuban drummer
Manhattan Beach, CA

Jerry Brown
Potter (Southern stoneware tradition)
Hamilton, AL

Walker Calhoun
Cherokee musician/dancer/teacher
Cherokee, NC

Clyde Davenport
Appalachian fiddler
Monticello, KY

Belle Deacon
Athabascan basketmaker
Grayling, AK

Nora Ezell
African-American quilter
Eutaw, AL

Gerald R. Hawpetoss
Menominee/Potowatomi regalia maker
Milwaukee, WI

Fatima Kuinova
Bukharan Jewish singer
Rego Park, NY

John Naka
Bonsai sculptor
Los Angeles, CA

Ng Sheung-Chi
Chinese *Toissan muk'yu* folk singer
New York, NY

Marc Savoy
Cajun accordion maker/musician
Eunice, LA

Othar Turner
African-American fife player
Senatobia, MS

T. Viswanathan
South Indian flute master
Middletown, CT

* (deceased)